

United States Department of Agriculture
EXTENSION SERVICE
Washington, D. C.

DIGEST OF HOMEMAKERS' CHATS FOR WEEK OF APRIL 6, 1942

Monday. - Small Fruits for Home Gardens. A home fruit garden is family insurance in vitamins and minerals. Small fruits--berries, grapes, and currants--have the advantage over tree fruits for the home garden because they come into bearing earlier, take up less space, and the control of pests is much easier with them. For grapes you can build an arbor over the front or back walk; berry vines can be trained over the back fence; and currants and gooseberry bushes can be used to make a hedge for the vegetable garden. Any of this fruit needs full sun exposure and fertile, well-drained soil. The strawberry is first choice for the home garden. It ripens first in the spring and is rich in vitamin C. Second choice is the grape. Like strawberries, grapes of some variety will thrive in almost any locality. As for other berries - raspberries, dewberries, blackberries, youngberries - the choice depends on the location and soil. Further information is available in free bulletins of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

Tuesday. - Question Box. Several questions on the subject of home canning have been received. First, where can one get reliable directions for canning different kinds of fruits and vegetables. This may be obtained by writing for "Home Canning of Fruits, Vegetables, and Meats," Farmers' Bulletin No. 1762, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. Second, how to get supplies like sugar, metal jar tops, or cans? These will be made available for home canning through the usual sources. Your local rationing board will announce how to get additional amounts of sugar for canning. A third question--Is it possible to can fruit without sugar? Canning experts say it's quite possible, in fact fruit often is canned that way for diabetic diets or for pie-making. Directions from the canning bulletin are to can juicy fruits--berries, cherries, currants and plums--in their own juice rather than with water. With less juicy fruits, substitute water for the usual sirup. Fruit juices can also be put up without sugar and sweetened as the juice is used. Honey may be used for half the sugar called for in making jams, jellies, and preserves.

Wednesday. - More About Dried Eggs. Just now the war is responsible for increased interest in dried eggs, although there has been an egg drying industry in the country since 1800. Before February 1, more than 30 million pounds of dried eggs were delivered for United Nations shipment, the equivalent of well over a billion shell eggs. This takes up only about one-fourth the shipping space required for shell eggs, and too does away with the need for refrigeration. On a smaller scale dried eggs would help the same way in our transportation and kitchens here at home, later on when so much of them are not needed for shipment abroad. The Department of Agriculture is working on grades for dried eggs, and at least one company is now experimenting with consumer packages.

Thursday. - Question Box. The first question is, "Why have special work clothes? Nobody sees you anyway, and you can wear out old clothes while working around home." Clothes not designed for work are seldom practical for that purpose. They are not comfortable, and may prove dangerous around the stove, or by catching on to things. They may cause more washing and ironing because of unsuitable materials. The second question asks for desserts to use that take less sugar. The answer is fruit. It generally contains its own sugar and flavor. When fresh fruits are not available, use dried, canned, or frozen fruit. The third question, brought on by the approach of warm weather, is with regard to precautions against spread of moths when boxes that have been stored are opened. The entomologists say to fumigate with carbon disulphide. Put 3 tablespoonfuls of the fumigant in a pie tin and set it on top of garments in the trunk or box. Close, seal cracks, and leave from 12 to 24 hours before opening the trunk.

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DIGEST OF HOMEMAKERS' CHATS

Week of April 13, 1942

Monday - Growing Your Own Seasonings. Now, when Victory Gardens are being planned, is the time to set aside a space for growing savory herbs. A plot 10 by 12 feet will supply seasonings for an average sized family. The soil should be rich and well drained. Put the annuals on one side and the perennials on the other. A good variety of annuals would be parsley, summer savory, basil, sweet marjoram, and dill. On the perennial side-- sage, mint, thyme, chives, and tarragon. For full information on herbs for the kitchen garden, write to the United States Department of Agriculture.

Tuesday - Question Box. First comes a question from a housewife who has more rhubarb ready in the garden than she can use. One suggestion is that she put up rhubarb juice for fruit drinks during the summer. Rhubarb juice makes a good base for fruit punches, and the preserving process is simple. The second question is from a housewife who has no success with home-made baked beans. Food scientists in Nebraska have found that certain minerals in soil and water--magnesium and calcium salts--will make the beans hard. To soak the beans, use soft water--rain water if the water in the locality is hard--or at least partly soften the hard water by boiling it for 20 to 30 minutes. Some bean skins contain a lot of calcium and others become hard during long storage. Also, molasses and acid tomato juice used in flavoring may have a hardening effect on the beans. The last question is about making liver patties. Here's what is needed to make liver patties for 6: 1 pound of liver, 6 slices bacon, 1/4 cup bread crumbs, 1 teaspoon onion juice, 1/4 cup tomato puree, 1 egg beaten, 1 teaspoon salt, and 1/4 teaspoon pepper. Drop liver in boiling water for 2 minutes. Remove skin and chop the liver. Fry the bacon just a little. Mix bacon fat with chopped liver, bread crumbs, onion juice, tomato, egg, salt and pepper. Form into patties. Wrap strip of bacon around each cake and fasten with a toothpick. Bake in greased pan in slow oven for about an hour.

Wednesday - Spring Lamb Pointers. Spring lamb is now on the market. This is the meat from animals about 3 to 5 months old. The meat is tender and usually more delicate in flavor than from older lambs, and the color is a little lighter. As a rule the price is a little higher. Meat from the neck, shank, breast, and flank of lamb is usually in the lower-cost group. Leg and chuck are in the medium cost range, and loin and rib chop cuts are usually higher. The heart, kidney, and liver of lamb are good to eat, are rich in vitamins and minerals, and are economical.

Thursday - Question Box. The first writer asks what savory herbs to plant in a porch box. The choice depends on the family's tastes. Basil, dill, chives, cress, and mint are easy to grow in pots or boxes, also mint, peppermint, spearmint, curled parsley, sweet marjoram, and rose geranium. Another woman asks how to build stairs to make them safe. Good light is essential, either from a window at the side of the staircase, or where electricity is available, put in three-way switches at top and bottom of stairs. Have all steps same height, and provide reliable hand-rail. Never leave toys, brooms, or pails on the stairs, and teach children not to play on them. To the third question - "Do you advise cotton slips for the summer?" the clothing specialists answer that many women prefer cotton slips in summer. They are cool and inexpensive and can be put into the family wash or sent to the laundry. A cotton slip has body and is not transparent, a quality which makes it ideal under sheer cotton evening dresses.

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DIGEST OF HOMEMAKERS' CHATS

Week of April 20, 1942

Monday - Know Your Native Fruits. For years plant scientists have been urging Americans to use and grow native fruits, to provide more variety in home meals at little cost. Many wild native fruits could be cultivated and improved, and they are rich in food value. The persimmon, praised by early American explorers, thrives even on barren eroded ground, and the fruit is rich in vitamin C. The American pawpaw grows in the same parts of the country as the persimmon and its leaves and flowers make it ornamental as well as useful. It is hardy, will grow on any soil, and is rarely attacked by insects or disease. Also, there are useful wild berries. The wild juneberry and the buffaloberry in the Rocky Mountain region, the elderberry in the Eastern States, the wild highbush cranberry and the western sand cherry of the Great Plains are plentiful and useful. It is time for American housewives to be wise and get acquainted with their native wild fruits.

Tuesday - Question Box. A housewife asks for a quick way to put out the flame when fat catches on fire, and how to remove the black from kitchen woodwork and walls resulting from such fire. Chemists say the best way to put out a fat fire is to smother it by spreading a moist cloth or towel over the burning fat. This cuts off the air and puts out the fire automatically. To remove the smoke from walls, you can use a commercial preparation or make your own soap jelly by dissolving one part of mild or neutral soap flakes in five parts of hot water. Allow to cool and apply to wall with up-and-down strokes, overlapping to avoid streaks. Wash small space at a time. Rinse with clean cloth and water, and wipe dry. A little kerosene oil added to the soap jelly will help to remove the greasy smoke. The second question is from a housewife who wants to know if pipes of furnaces and stoves go to pieces faster in summer than in winter when they are in use. Yes, they do, because moisture collects on soot left in the pipe and forms an acid, which attacks the metal. The pipes should be cleaned thoroughly in the spring, when the fire is out, and stored in a dry place. Wrapping in newspapers helps, as does painting the outside and inside of the pipe with asphaltum. If the pipe must be left on the furnace, leave doors, dampers, and openings wide open to allow free air circulation. The last question: "Will ordinary floor wax damage mastic tile?" Manufacturers of linoleum, cork, mastic tile, and rubber floor coverings advise using only self-polishing wax or water wax on these floorings. Solvents in other kinds of wax may dissolve or damage the material.

Wednesday - Bees and Sugar Rations. A lot of people want to know why the beekeepers, who say they are going to help out on the sugar shortage, must ask the Government to allow sugar for their industry. Right now the bees are busy raising their young so that there will be 50 or 60 thousand bees to the hive ready to gather the honey crop that will be ready in a few weeks. In the meantime, the supply they laid in last summer has given out, perhaps because the beekeeper took too much of it in the fall, or the winter was longer or colder

than average, and the crops that supply honey are late. Bees can starve to death in a day, and they will eat only their own sweet or our pure granulated white sugar. Ordinarily the beekeeper gives them sugar and keeps the mineral-rich honey to sell. This is what he wants to do now. The bees will be given only the amount of sugar that is necessary to keep them alive, and in the next few months will return many pounds of honey for every pound of sugar they have received. In addition to producing the honey, the bees will also perform their duties of plant fertilization.

Thursday - Question Box. The first question is about saving odd jars with screw tops and other metal lids. Can these be used for canning? The home economist says no. Most of these containers do not have standard tops and cannot be refitted satisfactorily for home-canned food. But most of them will do for jams and preserves that will be covered on top with paraffin, or pickles and relishes containing vinegar that don't need a tight seal. From jars we go to a clothes question: What can I do to get the most possible wear out of store dresses? Before wearing them, look over the buttons, snaps, buckles, and other fastenings, and sew them securely. If seams are stitched too close to edge, run straighter seams of even width all the way down, or if there are breaks in the stitching, go over these. Hand-sew the pocket corners to make them strong. Keep dresses on hangers in the closet, brush and press them often, and have them cleaned before they are too soiled. Change to work clothes before doing kitchen jobs. And the last question is about poultry work. The writer says: "I have been pretty successful with poultry. What could I do in that line to help with the war effort?" Poultry husbandmen of the U. S. Department of Agriculture say there is a real need for persons with extensive poultry experience to become trained flock-selecting and pullorum-testing agents. Schools, lasting from 3 days to a week, for the training of these agents, are held every year in 31 of our States. Those passing the examination at the end of the course may be authorized by the official State agency to select and test flocks for hatcheries participating in the National Poultry Improvement Plan. Get in touch with your poultry specialist to find out where the State training school will be held.

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Washington, D. C.

DIGEST OF HOMEMAKERS' CHATS
Week of April 27, 1942

Monday - Stretching Your Sugar in Canning. The Government is encouraging families to preserve all possible home-raised food as health insurance for themselves, and to help relieve the country's transportation load. But the problem of sugar rationing brings up many questions from housewives about putting up fruit. It is possible to can fruit with little or no sugar at all and to sweeten it later as it is served. Also fruit juice can be put up without sugar. Canning specialists suggest that sweeter, juicier fruits are good put up in their own juice rather than a sweet sirup. Cooking the fruit in an open kettle before putting it into the jar draws juice from the fruit so you have enough liquid to cover the fruit without using much sirup. Or you can substitute corn sirup or honey for half the sugar in canning - more than half will affect the fruit flavor. Strong-flavored sirups are not satisfactory for canning fruit, and saccharine can't be used in canning because heating makes it bitter. In jams, jellies, preserves, and marmalades you can use slightly less sugar than the regular recipe calls for, say three-fourths as much sugar as fruit instead of equal weights. Honey or corn sirup can also be substituted for part of the sugar in jams and jellies. In using sirups, the mixtures must be cooked a little longer to get the same consistency as when sugar is used.

Tuesday - Question Box. Today's questions deal with garden pests. First, what animal or insect cuts down plants at night? Entomologists say that cutworms do this damage in the garden. To protect plants that have a single straight stem, the easiest way is to place a circle of stiff paper around the plant, so that it is set down in the soil about an inch and is about 2 inches above the ground. In larger gardens using poisoned bait is the best way to get rid of cutworms. Mix 2 tablespoons of white arsenic or Paris green with 5 pounds of dry bran. Add 5 to 6 quarts of water, or enough to make a crumbly mass. Put this bait out in the garden in early evening, around plants, or spread between rows. For printed information write to U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., for Leaflet No. 2, Cutworms in the Garden. A second gardener had trouble last year with some insect that destroyed leaves and beans, and she wants to know if the seeds can be treated before planting to prevent such damage. This is the work of the Mexican bean beetle. The spiny yellow worms or grubs of this beetle feed rapidly on the underside of the leaves and completely strip the plant. Treating the seeds won't prevent the trouble, but the beans can be saved by spraying or dusting and destroying beetles and eggs as they are found. Start spraying as soon as the beetles appear. Use a dust or spray containing derris or pyrethrum or a spray of cryolite. Apply thoroughly and carefully to underside of the leaves. If cryolite is used, don't spray after the pods begin to form. You can continue treating the pods if you use derris or pyrethrum, because they don't leave harmful residues on

the beans. If you wish a good first-aid manual for your Victory Garden, write to the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., for Farmers' Bulletin No. 1371 called Diseases and Insects of Garden Vegetables.

Wednesday - Beans for Wartime Food. Serve more baked beans, boiled beans, bean croquettes, bean soup, or beans any way you like them. The Government has just stepped up its pork-buying program a lot. Extra pigs raised in the Food-for-Freedom campaign aren't big enough to market yet, and after we make allowances for our armed forces and the requirements for shipment of pork to our Allies, there isn't much pork left for the rest of us, so we should look for other foods for the time being. It is logical that in wartime we should save what's scarce and use what's plentiful, and this year's bean crop is the largest in history. So we should eat more beans. Our reasons for eating beans or pork are very similar. First, we like them, and second, they're both good foods for protein. To help you think of different ways to use beans, the cheapest of all protein foods, the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., is offering a leaflet called Dried Beans and Peas in Low-Cost Meals. Two or three times a week is not too often to serve beans in low-cost meals, but of course you shouldn't eat them every day and skip animal protein foods - meat, eggs, milk, cheese - entirely.

Thursday - Question Box. The first writer wants information on the best ways of storing fruits and vegetables she expects from her Victory Garden. To get some ideas on the kind of storage place to make ready, write to the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., for Farmers' Bulletin 879, on Home Storage of Vegetables. This bulletin will tell you the best ways of storing each product as it comes along. If you are thinking of improving your canned-food pantry, you might ask for Farmers' Bulletin 1865, Closets and Storage Spaces, along with the bulletin on home storage of vegetables. The second question is from a young woman whose husband has gained weight while away in army camp and she wants advice on making his best civilian suit over into something else. Clothing specialists say she might remodel the suit into one for herself if she is not too large. The suit should be ripped apart, and all pieces cleaned and pressed. A little ingenuity will be required in getting a skirt out of the trousers, but it can usually be done. If the coat has set-in pockets that are not in good places for a woman's jacket they will have to be removed and the cuts covered in some way. Since a woman's coat laps opposite to a man's the button-holes will have to be cut off or sewed up and new ones made.

The last question is about common garden pests--snails and slugs. Entomologists say that snails and slugs feed upon a wide variety of plants, and the best way to get rid of them is to apply a poisoned bait over the infested area. This can be prepared by using 1 ounce of powdered metaldehyde in 3 lbs. of wheat bran or corn meal, or you can use commercial preparations for slug control containing this chemical. You can get more information about slugs and snails by writing to the U. S. Department of Agriculture at Washington, D. C., and asking for Farmers' Bulletin 1895.